

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 2:00 PM, January 4, 2005

Words' Worth
The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by Grant Cogswell

Today's Words' Worth poet is Bryan Miller

Bryan Miller holds a Bachelor's Degree in Creative Writing from Seattle University. He has been a freelance-writer for SUN magazine, and a frequent contributor of poems and short stories to *Fragments* Literary Journal. While working in Zambia in 2001, he wrote several case studies that were produced as a documentary for British Television Channel Four, and which are now taught in graduate lectures at the London School of Economics. He has published two chapbooks of poetry. He was born and raised in Western Washington, and now lives in the First Hill District of Seattle.

**SEPTEMBER EVENING ON THE PORCH WITH A LOVER
AFTER A FUNERAL**

I.

A cold drop just now on your palm marks
the first moment of autumn.

Lavender thick as a corncob
or a farmer's wrist

swings safely in the new rain.
Quiet sneaks out from behind its curtain.

Where will you be
when you're old as these evergreens

and pressing down on the brown
armrest of an old chair? Where will you be

when I'm gone?
The full moon sleeps behind a seamless cloud.

II.

It didn't actually happen like that.

After the funeral, alone
I drove to a Chinese Restaurant and sat

at a long table with relatives
who spoke without knowing what to say.

I drank from a glass of diamonds
half-listened to the silence in my own mouth,

and imagined how much
being in love

might have made the moment
different, light wind

back of house
with a big square yard, brown eyes

pleading back at mine, frightened also
at the darkness behind the fractured clouds.

Hymnal

There are voices singing in the house
on the corner, and a baby crying.

In this house we sit with you
and you wait to die.

Outside, fog
lifts.

Stars everywhere, bright and far.
In the change that comes tonight

let your hand be held, let us whisper to you
what you always told:

*the earth wraps around us
wraps around you no matter*

like a hymn.